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86th Year

TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

Powell: Follow the 'map'

Colin Powell urged Israel and the Palestinians to "get started" on implementing the "road map" toward peace. The U.S. secretary of state made his comments Sunday, when he met separately with Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas.

Abbas called on Israel to accept the internationally backed plan and allow P.A. President Yasser Arafat to travel freely.

Powell called the Israeli proposals to improve conditions for the Palestinians "very promising." The measures are expected to include eased travel restrictions on Palestinians and a release of some 200 Palestinian administrative detainees.

Jew arrested for religious arsons

A member of Los Angeles' Iranian Jewish community was arrested in connection with a string of arson attacks that targeted religious institutions, including synagogues, in the San Fernando Valley.

Farshid Tehrani, 40, was arrested early last Friday by police, who had been tracking him for a day after receiving a tip linking him to the five arson incidents in Encino.

During three successive days last week, incendiary devices, described by some as Molotov cocktails, were hurled at the Bahai Faith Community Center, the Iranian Synagogue, Da'at Torah Educational Center and Valley Beth Shalom, one of the leading Conservative congregations in the Los Angeles area. About 10 days earlier, an attack on the First Presbyterian Church of Encino caused \$75,000 to \$100,000 in damage, according to the Los Angeles Times. [Page 3]

Assad: No crackdown on terror

Syria hasn't decided whether to crack down on Palestinian terror groups operating on its soil, Syrian President Bashar Assad said.

Assad's comments, made in an interview with Newsweek, came after U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell told reporters after meeting with Assad earlier this month that Syria had agreed to clamp down on these groups.

"We talked about all these issues, but no final decision was made," Assad said in the interview, which was posted on the magazine's Web site. "We are still talking."

BEHIND THE HEADLINES

Court ruling on fund raising could heighten scrutiny at Jewish groups

By Joe Berkofsky

NEW YORK (JTA) — Jewish philanthropies could come under new scrutiny in the wake of a Supreme Court decision tightening rules on fund raising.

The Supreme Court ruled recently that the First Amendment's guarantee of free speech cannot be used to protect telemarketing companies if they mislead donors about what portion of their contributions will go to the intended charity.

The 9-0 ruling arose out of an Illinois case in which Telemarketing Associates retained 85 percent of the money it raised for the veterans group VietNow, but told donors a significant amount would go to the veterans.

Legally the ruling will not deeply affect Jewish federations, foundations and other nonprofits because few of them use telemarketing widely in fund raising.

But the case could raise new public awareness about charities, many say.

"This is a wake-up call to the entire philanthropic community," said Michael Fisher, a consultant to the United Jewish Communities federation umbrella in New York. "Whenever there is significant abuse uncovered, it certainly has a significant effect on how everybody looks at what they do."

Despite that new focus, the high court's ruling is unlikely to prompt legal or ethical restrictions on many Jewish nonprofits.

Most Jewish groups don't rely on telemarketing firms to do their fund raising.

Most "dialing for dollars" by the UJC's 156 member federations is conducted by volunteers during annual Super Sundays and ongoing phone-a-thon campaigns, Fisher said.

Federations also have a built-in "constituency," Fisher added, and don't generally need to spend money in order to raise money via contractors, a process known as "donor acquisition."

The case of Los Angeles is typical. John Fishel, executive vice president of the Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles, said his federation raised about \$42.5 million in 2002 — plus another \$20 million in Israel emergency funds.

Only a "few million" flowed in through telemarketing, he said. The L.A. federation dedicated between 8 percent and 9 percent of its overall take to pay for the cost of fund raising, he added.

But Fishel said the Supreme Court decision would serve as a reminder to his federation that "credibility and accountability are absolutely necessary to ensure that people continue to support you."

Others said they try to avoid using professional fund-raising firms because they tend to carry a high price tag.

"Telemarketing is the most expensive way to raise money," said Barry Shrage, president of the Combined Jewish Philanthropies of Greater Boston. "You avoid it at all costs."

Last year the CJP took in some \$28.5 million. Shrage estimated that perhaps 5 percent was dedicated to telemarketing.

Because telemarketing often brings in smaller gifts, doing business that way is more expensive than soliciting major donors directly, he added.

Those federations who do rely on telemarketing tend to be smaller organizations, Fisher said.

One smaller federation, the Jewish Community Federation of the Greater East Bay,

MIDEAST FOCUS

Bush wants open Mideast trade

President Bush will propose a free-trade zone across the Middle East.

In Bush's plan, the free-trade zone would take hold within a decade and would be modeled after pacts the United States has with Israel and Jordan.

Israeli killed in shooting attack

An Israeli was killed in a shooting attack Sunday in the West Bank. Tzion David, 53, was killed when the car he was traveling in near the settlement of Ofra came under fire and flipped over. Another car was damaged but none of its passengers was hurt.

Terrorists from Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat's Fatah movement and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine both claimed responsibility, Israel Radio reported.

Palestinian killed in Gaza Strip

Israeli troops killed a Palestinian man attempting to enter Israel illegally from the Gaza Strip. The man approached the security fence Saturday night near the Kissufim Crossing, reports said.

Israel deports U.S. Muslims

Israel has deported at least two American Muslims who were staying in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The deportations were part of measures adopted after an April 30 suicide bombing at a Tel Aviv bar carried out by terrorists with British passports. Deportation orders were also issued against foreign activists who were arrested in the West Bank last Friday on suspicion of involvement in terrorist activity.

In addition, the head of the Israeli army's southern command issued an order requiring all foreigners entering the Gaza Strip to sign a waiver exempting Israel from responsibility should they be killed or injured, the daily Ha'aretz reported.

outside San Francisco, took in \$14 million and spent about \$1.5 million on fund raising — though only about \$25,000 of that was for a telemarketing firm, the federation's executive vice president, Ami Nahshon, said.

But that federation hired the telemarketing firm for a flat fee, not on a per-dollar basis, which Nahshon said is in line with a standard code of ethics.

"When we use mass-marketing techniques, telemarketing or direct mail, we're very conscious of the cost," he said.

Though Nahshon said any new attention on fund-raising ethics arising from the telemarketing ruling was welcome, others said they doubted the ruling would make much of an impact on the Jewish philanthropic world.

Ira Kaminow, a Washington-based public policy analyst and a Jewish philanthropy watchdog, said the telemarketing ruling has not attracted much attention generally, and was not likely to stir much reaction.

"I would be surprised if this had a shelf-life of more than one month or two," added Kaminow, who has launched a Web site called Tzedakah.org to raise ethical standards of Jewish philanthropies, and who was able to observe the closing arguments in the high court case.

Still, the ruling "might have a chilling effect in that organizations might be more reluctant to hire telemarketers," he said.

Only two or three "well-known" Jewish nonprofits use telemarketers on a regular basis, he said, though he declined to name them.

But Mark Charendoff, president of the Jewish Funders Network, which supports Jewish nonprofit foundations, said the ruling raises far-reaching questions about fund raising generally.

"Quite apart from what the law demands, is there an ethical standard that Jews working in the not-for-profit world, or Jews funding not-for-profit agencies, ought to hold themselves or others to, in terms of reasonable allocation of overhead costs?" he said.

So-called "operating costs" at foundations vary, Charendoff added, but he feels a healthy range for foundations is between 10 percent and 50 percent of a funds' assets.

Ultimately, "the point is not the legislation," Charendoff added, "but that the legislation raises the larger issues," he said.

The answer to those issues should come from the Jewish community itself, he insisted, rather than through legislation forced upon nonprofits.

"When Congress has to step in and legislate in the philanthropic sector, it's often because of the philanthropic sector's failure to police itself," Charendoff said.

"To me, the story was a wake-up call, or should serve as a wake-up call, to say, 'If this is something Washington is concerned with, I would much rather have the not-for-profit community, and certainly the Jewish not-for-profit community, take the high road in policing ourselves,'" he said. □

Frankfurt marks book burnings

NEW YORK (JTA) — Frankfurt is marking the 70th anniversary of Nazi book burnings.

On Sunday, a series of readings of authors banned by the Nazis was launched in the German city.

Beginning May 10, 1933, and lasting for several days, books were burned as part of the Nazis' censorship campaign. Many of the books were then banned, including those by Jewish authors such as Sigmund Freud and Franz Kafka. □

Beersheba girl wins Bible quiz

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Moran Gomri, a 16-year-old Beersheba resident, won the 2003 International Bible Quiz.

Jerusalem's Neria Klein, 17, placed second in the competition held in Jerusalem on May 7.

Daniel Kirsh, a resident of Ginot Shomron, took third place.

Joshua Nehemiah Laker of New Jersey won the quiz's Diaspora category. □



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JEWISH WORLD

Arrests in cemetery desecration

British police have arrested seven people in connection with the desecration of a Jewish cemetery. The arrests were made after more than 380 graves were found toppled at the Plashet Jewish cemetery in London. British Jewish leaders denounced the attacks.

Anti-Israel boycott fails

A British teachers union rejected a motion to boycott Israeli academics.

By a 2-1 vote, the Association of University Teachers rejected a motion by Sue Blackwell, a pro-Palestinian activist from Birmingham University, for AUT members to "review immediately, with a view to severing, any academic links they may have with official Israeli institutions, including universities."

Andy Marks, founder of the International Academic Friends of Israel, said, "We are pleased that the AUT came to the right conclusion. However, it concerns us that such a motion ever made it on their agenda."

Pro-Israel petitions packed

Pro-Israel activists trained by the American Israel Public Affairs Committee collected 55,000 student signatures on 60 pro-Israel petitions.

Each petition was published in a college's newspaper with the aid of sponsoring groups on campus, then sent to a local member of Congress, along with a speaking invitation.

The 55,000 signatures will be presented at an international celebration for Israel's 55th birthday in Washington on May 19.

Orthodox group eyes liquor ban

A rabbinical group will consider banning hard liquor in Orthodox congregations.

Rabbi Hershel Billet, the president of the Rabbinical Council of America, told the New York Jewish Week that he will propose restricting the use of hard liquor on Shabbat and other religious occasions during the group's annual convention later this month.

Billet is the rabbi of Young Israel of Woodmere, N.Y., which recently issued its own liquor ban after a teen-age member drank too much and got sick at a kiddush.

Mauthausen gets visitors center

A visitors center was dedicated at the former Mauthausen concentration camp in Austria.

The opening of the center was part of ceremonies marking the 58th anniversary of the camp's liberation by U.S. troops.

"It is the task of every generation today and in the future to recognize" violence and racism and "fight them at their very root," said Andreas Khol, president of the Austrian Parliament.

Leaders shocked after Iranian Jew arrested for series of religious arsons

By Tom Tugend

LOS ANGELES (JTA) — Leaders of the Iranian Jewish community are disturbed that a member of their community is believed to be responsible for a string of arson attacks that targeted religious institutions, including synagogues.

At the same time, however, they expressed relief that the attacks apparently were not motivated by anti-Semitism.

Farshid Tehrani, 40, was arrested early last Friday by police, who had been tracking him for a day after receiving a tip linking him to the five arson incidents in Encino in the San Fernando Valley.

During three successive days last week, incendiary devices, described by some as Molotov cocktails, were hurled at the Bahai Faith Community Center, the Iranian Synagogue, Da'at Torah Educational Center and Valley Beth Shalom, one of the leading Conservative congregations in the Los Angeles area.

About 10 days earlier, a similar attack on the First Presbyterian Church of Encino caused \$75,000 to \$100,000 in damage, according to the Los Angeles Times. Damage at the other locations was relatively minor, and there were no injuries.

Sam Kermanian, secretary general of the Iranian American Jewish Federation, told JTA that his community, as "one of the targets of these attacks, had been extremely concerned that they were hate- or terrorism-related."

Relief over the arrest was mingled "with deep shock at the possibility that the perpetrator might be someone from our community.

"This obviously cannot be the work of a healthy mind," he added.

Tehrani apparently suffered from depression.

"It's disturbing that an Iranian Jewish immigrant is believed to be the perpetrator, but I understand that he had psychological problems," said George Haroonian, president of the Council of Iranian American Jewish Organizations. "You will find this in every community, and it tells us that we must try to identify such problems early on."

Pooya Dayanim, president of the Iranian Jewish Public Affairs Committee, urged government agencies to channel grants directly to the Iranian Jewish community to enable it to deal more effectively with mental and other health problems.

Investigation of the attacks was conducted through one of the largest local law enforcement mobilizations in recent history, with more than 150 police, fire department, FBI and other federal investigators working on the case. These included 65 detectives from the L.A. Police Department's anti-terrorism division.

Police said there was no evidence linking Tehrani to terrorist groups or causes. One official described him to the L.A. Times as a firebug with serious personal problems.

According to his immediate family, Tehrani came to the United States about 16 years ago and worked hard in his jewelry business in downtown Los Angeles, until a "depressive disorder" forced him to give up most of his work two years ago.

His younger sister, Sheena Tehrani, described her brother as "a kind, caring" man "who just got burned out.

"There has to be some mistake. He is not that type of person," she said.

Rabbi Moshe Hafuta of the Da'at Torah Educational Center told the Times that he had been involved in a dispute over an apartment he rented from Tehrani, and that a blaze, apparently set with lamp fluid, broke out at the apartment in late April.

The Times investigation also reported that the state of California had filed two tax liens against Tehrani, who, in turn, had tried to sue two judges who had ruled against him.

The fears engendered by the arson attacks motivated congregations and people of all faiths to come closer through meetings and gestures of support.

Rabbi Harold Schulweis of Valley Beth Shalom noted that when the Molotov cocktail heaved through a sanctuary window at 6:30 a.m. landed a few feet from the ark, the Hispanic Catholic custodians rushed in to save five Torah scrolls.

In a news conference last Friday evening, Los Angeles Mayor James Hahn and police announced that an arrest had been made, but pleaded with the media not to divulge the suspect's name or background. The Times ignored the request. □

As Israel celebrates its 55th anniversary, JTA has asked prominent Israelis from across the political spectrum to discuss the challenges facing the Jewish state. This is the third in the series.

CHALLENGES AT 55

Israel must work for peace, but not expect it to come instantly

By Amnon Rubinstein

TEL AVIV (JTA) — On the eve of Israel's 55th Independence Day, the country can look backward and forward with a mixture of satisfaction and anxiety: satisfaction that it is surviving constant and murderous Palestinian acts of terrorism and Arab enmity and that it is broadcasting to the whole world a determination to hold on and not to give up its Zionist dream of a Jewish and democratic state; anxiety as to the prospects for peace and security.

There is a glimmer of hope: The "road map" toward peace and the election of Mahmoud Abbas as Palestinian Authority prime minister may, one prays, offer a way out of the vicious circle of terrorism and repressive counter-measures. But recent terror attacks in Kfar Saba and Tel Aviv snuffed out optimistic thoughts.

There is no sign that Hamas and its cohorts are ready or willing to abide by the no-violence clause in the road map — and without this there is no plan and all hope is dashed. But Israel faces greater dangers: Weapons of mass destruction are menacing Israel from Iran and Syria, and these weapons are coupled with a growing anti-Israeli and anti-Jewish hysteria that renders their use all the more probable.

It is no wonder, therefore, that many Israelis have given up on their cherished dream of instant peace and a "New Middle East." Indeed, most Israelis have given up their much-cherished credos: The left, crushed and diminished by P.A. President Yasser Arafat's treachery, is painfully giving up its belief that Israeli concessions will ensure an ever-lasting peace; and the right is gradually retreating from its belief in a Greater Israel and in the idea that Israel can rule over the Palestinian people, who hate and violently reject its dominion.

The main policy of Israel, around which all its diplomatic efforts should be concentrated, is to ensure its survival without pinning all hopes on instant peace. This can be achieved, especially in view of the war in Iraq, only by relying on the assurances of the United States and its public opinion.

If Israel doesn't have an American security umbrella, the Arab states and the Palestinian leadership will be tempted to continue their policies of not making up with the Jewish state. Indeed, the entire Middle East could experience another of its serial mad explosions, with all its attendant risks. Israel's main challenge, therefore, is to ensure a continuing American commitment to its security, as well as a supportive American public opinion.

This factor, and not vain hopes in a quick peace fix, should direct the Israeli government to accept and be ready to implement the American road map and give up the elusive and harmful dream of ever-growing Jewish settlements in what inevitably will be non-Israeli territories.

Israel can look backward with tremendous pride. Minute in size, not much bigger than a sliver of Mediterranean coastline, it has withstood continuing Arab onslaughts, wars, boycott and terrorism; it has turned itself from a poor, rural country into an industrial and post-industrial powerhouse; despite the long road

ahead, and the need for further integration, it has reduced social, educational and health gaps between its various components, including gaps between Arabs and Jews. Some of its achievements are unprecedented: Israeli Arabs have a higher life expectancy than European whites.

Its democracy functions, inside Israel proper, in times of great national emergency; it boasts of the most activist and interventionist courts in the world, who do not fear to tread where other courts shun intervention; it has maintained freedom of the press in time of war; it stands out as a singular democratic, First World island in an Arab and Muslim sea of poverty and backwardness.

In short, it deserves support, and its existence and prosperity are in American and Western interests. But it is also incumbent upon Israel to comply with American and Western interests and rules of behavior — and these rules of behavior require total acceptance of the road map and all that this implies, including a freeze on settlements. □

(Amnon Rubinstein, a former member of the Israeli Knesset from the Meretz Party, is dean of the law school at the Interdisciplinary Center in Herzliya.)

Holland outlaws Muslim group with alleged links to terrorism

By Rachel Levy

AMSTERDAM (JTA) — A Rotterdam-based Islamic charity has been outlawed and its moneys frozen after Dutch intelligence concluded its funds are used to finance Hamas terrorism.

Holland's foreign minister, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, outlawed the Al-Aqsa Foundation after the intelligence service published its 2002 annual report last month. The report says that foundation money is transferred to Hamas to buy weapons and train suicide bombers.

Last winter, German intelligence concluded the same about a German foundation by the same name. An attorney for the Dutch group claimed it is not related to the German organization.

But as German investigators reached their conclusions, Dutch intelligence already strongly suspected that Al-Aqsa in Holland was not using its money for humanitarian goals. An elaborate investigation apparently confirmed the intelligence service's suspicion.

All Al-Aqsa funds have been frozen since de Hoop Scheffer's decree. The organization is protesting the decision, and has decided to take legal action against it.

A representative from the Center for Information and Documentation Israel, the Dutch equivalent of the Anti-Defamation League, said he is "relieved" by the government's decision to freeze Al-Aqsa's funds.

Al-Aqsa officials met with government officials in mid-April, but were told the evidence against the group was classified, said Paul Lobato, an attorney for the foundation.

"Usually a suspect remains innocent unless proven guilty. We are guilty unless proven innocent," Lobato said.

The Al-Aqsa Foundation was established in Holland in 1993. It explicitly states it is a humanitarian organization, which collects money to support Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and in Lebanese refugee camps. It collected some \$680,000 last year, nearly half of it from mosques.

Al-Aqsa says that it works exclusively with humanitarian organizations. □